

(Washington, DC) Today, Congressman Alcee L. Hastings (D-Miramar) issued the following statement in commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):

“Twenty years ago, we took a historic step in the direction of equality when the Americans with Disabilities Act was signed into law.

“The Americans with Disabilities Act restores dignity and respect to persons with disabilities by ensuring that they have the tools and protections necessary to live active and independent lives.

“The ADA ensures equal opportunity for persons with disabilities in employment, State and local government services, public accommodations, commercial facilities, and transportation. Furthermore, it requires the establishment of telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD)/telephone relay services.

“The Americans with Disabilities Act was an important milestone in our nation’s history and I am pleased to join in celebrating its 20th anniversary. Our work, however, is far from over, and I will continue to work with my colleagues in Congress to ensure the equal treatment of all Americans.

“Through civil rights legislation such as the Americans with Disabilities Act, we are making equality a reality. I would like to congratulate my esteemed colleague, Congressman Jim Langevin of Rhode Island, who today became the first Member in a wheelchair to preside over the House of Representatives. His historic achievement is truly an inspiration to us all and a testament to the principle of equality for all. I would also like to thank my colleagues Senator Tom Harkin of Iowa, Congressman Edward Markey of Massachusetts, Congressman Patrick Kennedy of Rhode Island, and Congressman Jim Sensenbrenner of Wisconsin, as well as former Congressman Tony Coelho of California, for their leadership in making the Americans with Disabilities Act a reality.”

The ADA was signed into law on July 26, 1990 by President George H.W. Bush following its passage in both the House of Representatives and the Senate. Greater protections were given

to disabled workers on September 25, 2008 when President Bush signed several amendments to the ADA into law.

Congressman Alcee L. Hastings is Vice Chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, a senior member of the House Rules Committee, and Co-Chairman of the U.S. Helsinki Commission.

###